
Overseas electors

Since 1985, British citizens who are living outside the UK have been entitled to be registered as electors. Once registered as an overseas elector, you are entitled to vote in UK Parliamentary and European Parliament elections.

Who can register

You can register as an overseas elector if you are a British citizen and you have been on a UK electoral register at any time within the past 15 years.

You cannot register if you have never been registered as an elector in the UK. However, if you left the UK before you were 18 years of age you can register at your parents' or guardians' address, providing that you left the country no more than 15 years ago.

If you are overseas serving in the armed forces or as a Crown Servant, separate provisions apply; registration forms are available to download on www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.

How to register

You can download a registration form from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk. You can register as an overseas elector at any time - do not wait until an election is announced. You will need to provide:

- your full name and overseas address;

- the UK address where you last registered (or the address where you were living on the last qualifying date before you left); and
- the date you left the UK.

If this is the first time you have made an overseas elector's application you will have to give additional information to show you are a British citizen. If you left the UK before you were old enough to be registered, you will have to provide a copy of your full birth certificate and information about the parent or guardian whose registration address you are supplying.

You will also have to find someone to support what you say in your declaration. They can be anyone who:

- is aged 18 or over;
- is a British citizen;
- is not living in the UK; and
- is satisfied that you are not living in the UK on the date of the declaration but is not a close relative.

You should return the form, and any required supporting

documents to the electoral registration office where you were last registered to vote in the UK, or where your parent or guardian were registered, within three months of the date you sign the form.

Your registration will last for 12 months and must be renewed every year, but can be cancelled by you at any time. The electoral registration office will send you a reminder two–three months before your registration runs out.

The electoral register

There are now two versions of the electoral register – the full version and the edited version. Your details will appear on the full version, but you can choose whether or not your details appear on the edited register.

If you do not wish to appear on the edited register you should tick the box provided on the registration form. More information on this issue can be found in a leaflet *Who has your details* produced by The Electoral Commission which can be downloaded from www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Voting

Registered overseas electors are eligible to vote in elections to the UK and European Parliaments, but not UK local government elections or elections for the devolved assemblies. As any UK referendum requires special

legislation to be passed, this legislation would also determine who can vote in such a referendum.

Voting by post

If you want to vote by post you need to fill in a postal vote form. If you decide to vote by post your ballot paper will be sent to you about a week before the election. You should be aware that this may not be enough time to allow you to receive your ballot paper, mark your vote and send it back to be received by the close of poll.

Voting by proxy

You can appoint someone in the UK to vote for you. This is called a proxy vote and you need to complete a proxy vote application form. Your proxy must be:

- able and willing to vote on your behalf;
- living in the UK;
- a British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen;
- old enough to vote; and
- legally allowed to vote.

Your proxy can be anybody you trust to vote for you in the way you wish. You will need to tell your proxy which candidate you wish them to vote for. A person can only act as a proxy for two people at each election to whom they are not related and/or any number of close relatives. The proxy can vote either at the polling station for the area where you are registered or by post.

Voting in person

If you are in the UK on election day and you or your proxy have not applied for a postal vote you can vote in person at the polling station where you are registered to vote. It is not possible to vote at your local embassy or consulate. If you have appointed a proxy you can still vote in person, provided that your proxy has not already voted or applied to vote by post.

Contacts

If you need more information you can contact the Electoral Registration Officer for your UK registration address; you will find the council's details at the Commission's rolling registration site www.electoralcommission.org.uk/your-vote/rolling-reg.cfm or go direct to www.upmystreet.com.

Contact details for your nearest British consulate can be found at www.fco.gov.uk.

You can also contact the Commission at the address below.

Feedback

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